

BREAKING THE SILENCE

even though watching it at home
on video where i am free to fortify
myself with alcohol whenever my
vast courage seems in danger of
deserting me,

i find the silence of the lambs
the most disturbing film i have
ever seen. (i must confess i
have still not seen the exorcist,
and probably never will.) but
afterwards i am nearly evicted by
my wife and kids after subjecting
them to a litany of

"what kind of silence do you find
in a sweet potato patch?"

(the silence of the yams.)

"what kind of silence do you find
in a pigpen?"

(the silence of the hams.)

"what kind of silence do you find
in a hydroelectric project?"

(the silence of the dams.)

"what kind of silence do you find
in the tinned meat section of a supermarket?"

(the silence of the spams.)

cams, gams. jams, m'ams.
rams, sams. vietnams ...

two days later, the double-rhymes occur
to me, for instance, captain marvel and the
shazaams

POEM THAT EXISTS PURELY FOR ITS PUNCH LINE

after my poetry reading, she says,
"you're a ham,
and the worst of it is
i'm sure you'll never be cured."